

# *Analysis of Plant Landscaping in Chu Ci*

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**Keywords:** Chu ci (the songs of chu), Plant landscape, Plant artistic conception

**Abstract:** Under the background of the revival of traditional culture, this paper studies the plant species, quantity, selection characteristics and typical landscape patterns in Chu Ci (The Songs of Chu) through the methods of induction, summary and statistical analysis, from the perspective of landscape architecture. On the basis of inheriting the essence of classical gardens and integrating the needs of new era and new culture for plant landscaping, the modern application method of ancient plant landscaping is given, and it strives to provide more ideas for modern garden design. It aims to make the literary giant more realistic and spirit of the times, to promote regional civilization, to establish cultural self-confidence and to build a beautiful China.

## 1. Introduction

Chinese culture is broad and profound with a long history. *Chu Ci* is the first collection of romantic poetry in China. There are more than 6,000 related papers. At present, the research on its literature, history and architecture at home and abroad is mainly focused, followed by the research on Chu culture such as religion, diet, clothing and folk customs. However, there are only more than 20 studies on its plant direction in CNKI, and most of them focus on its image and plant emotion. A few articles on the application of plant culture and gardens in *Chu Ci* are also limited.

Since its publication in the Warring States period, *Chu Ci* has been praised by people in poetry. Few people know that the plants described in it represent the essence of Chu culture. As we all know, the plants in *Chu Ci* symbolize people's thought and character, especially the characteristics of characters in a specific historical period, but few people pay attention to plant species and plant landscape artistic conception. In the era of revival of traditional culture, from the perspective of landscape architecture, the paper pays attention to the contents of plant species and plant landscape design, and strives to provide more ideas for plant landscaping, so as to make the literary classics have more practical significance and the spirit of the times.

## 2. Overview

There are 17 chapters in *the Songs of Chu* compiled by Wang Yi. Among them, there are 14 chapters mentioning plants in Li Sao, Tian Wen, Jiu Ge, Jiu Zhang, Bu Ju, Jiu Bian, Zhao Hun, Da Zhao, Zhao Yinshi, Qi Jian, Ai Shiming, Jiu Huai, Jiu Tan and Jiu Si. There are 105 kinds of plants in total, including 24 kinds of trees, 5 kinds of shrubs, 68 kinds of herbs and 8 kinds of others. According to statistics, the trees that appear most frequently in the book are laurel, the shrubs are

Magnolia and the herbs are orchids.

Jiu Tan mentions the most plants, 39 species in total, followed by Lisao, 28 species in total.

### 3. Characteristics of Plant Selection in *Chu Ci*

The tree stratum is located at the top layer of the plant community and acts as a skeleton. [1] According to the description in *Chu Ci*, it can be seen from the analysis that about 20 species of magnolia, pepper, quince, cinnamon, cornel, orange, Chinese parasol, catalpa, birchleaf pear, hardwood, poplar, Chinese catalpa, shaddock, pine, cypress, fine tree, mulberry, elm, maple and Chinese hackberry are macrophanerophytes. Because they have the morphological characteristics of straight branches, excellent wood properties, beautiful texture and fine texture, and they are used to symbolize or compare the beautiful virtue of a gentleman. The bitter plum and bitter peach trees symbolize villains and incompetents. Others including mulberry, hazel and chestnut are medicinal macrophanerophytes.

The shrub layer plays a connecting role in the landscape of the whole community, increases the sense of hierarchy of the community, and has rich colors and pleasant scenery. [1] According to the records of *Chu Ci*, magnolia, as a kind of shrub, has been mentioned many times. It is a famous medicinal plant and fragrant flower plant to represent noble morality or beautiful things. Thorns, brambles and trifoliolate orange are often compared to villains because they all have thorny morphological characteristics. In addition, there are mythical shrubs such as a large mulberry.

The herbaceous layer is the layer occupied by herbaceous plants in the community, which can cover the surface, avoid the exposure of loess and improve the ornamental effect. In *Chu Ci*, there are 34 kinds of herbs, such as Gracilaria, some kinds of aromatic plants, orchid, weeds, eupatorium, Chinese herbaceous peony, sweetgrass, wild ginger, chrysanthemum, cordgrass, belamcanda chinensis, Life-flo, Ru, Lithops, twist branch, lotus, Ligusticum, and algae fungus, all of which can be used to represent the poet's pursuit and yearning for good morality because of their fragrance, graceful posture and other characteristics. Most of the 20 herbs such as Chenopodium, axis, wormwood, duckweed, pansy, butterbur, and *Alisma orientalis* have thorny branches or bitter and spicy taste, which are used to compare the immoral crafty villains or miserable situation. Artemisia, Trichosanthes, wild rice, yellow sorghum, cudrania, yarrow, early-maturing wheat and millet are used in the sacrifice. In addition, the four kinds of plants, namely, white catfish, polygonum, apple and knotgrass, do not have obvious emotional meaning.

Among other kinds of plants, nvluo, *Ficus pumila*, bamboo, glossy ganoderma and zucchini all represent good things or quality, while *Pueraria lobata* represents hateful behavior or habits.

### 4. Analysis of Typical Plant Landscape Patterns in *Chu Ci*

#### 4.1 Li Sao

In *Li Sao*, it is said that “Wild ginger and dahurian angelica, I hope they grow vigorously. So I can harvest them when they are ripe.” means that the ridge is divided to cultivate the wild ginger and fragrant dahurian angelica. The poet imitates people with things, says that he has accumulated many good things and plays the role of self-decoration. [2] This plant community is composed of four herbs that can be used as medicine, including Liu Yi (today's peony) + Jie Che (today's *Lysimachia*) + Du Heng (today's wild ginger) + Zhi (today's *Angelica dahurica*). In terms of hierarchical structure, the plant heights of peony and *Lysimachia* are similar. When they are planted on ridges, wild ginger is shorter, while *Angelica dahurica* is higher. Interplanting these two plants between peony and *Lysimachia* can fully reflect the hierarchical beauty of staggered vertical space and coordinated proportion of plant community. In terms of color matching, several designs and

colors are relatively fresh and elegant, with color fragrance and pleasant scenery, which improves the viewing effect and reflects the elegant aesthetic artistic conception of the ancients. In terms of seasonal structure, peony flowers bloom one after another in summer. Angelica dahurica opens a light white flower with fragrance everywhere. The leaves of wild ginger on one side are green, and the yellow leaves of Lysimachia and the white flowers are swaying. It's a beautiful scene in the field in summer.

#### 4.2 Qi Jian - Self Pity

“Mixed oranges and grapefruits are confined, and new foreigners and pepper frames are listed.” planting oranges and grapefruits into gardens, and then planting new foreigners, pepper and frames around them. In the chapters of the *Songs of Chu*, these plants are symbols of loyalty. Planting these good or fragrant trees in the garden shows the author's firm and persistent will. This plant community is composed of trees and shrubs, namely orange + pomelo + pepper + Zhen (today's privet) - Xin Yi (today's Purple Magnolia). Five kinds of plants are used to describe the “confined” garden scene in the state of Chu. The small trees of orange and grapefruit fruit trees are scattered as “confined”, both of which are evergreen trees with almost the same flower color and similar fruit color, forming an orchard with economic value. Purple Magnolia, pepper and privet increase in turn. This community can fully highlight the posture of small arbor pepper and the color of shrub Purple Magnolia, while large arbor privet plays the role of collocation and embellishment. Planting these plants around the orchard forms a staggered and well-organized isolation zone in the vertical spatial structure, which blocks the internal fruit tree area and plays the role of organizing and dividing space. When spring comes, the shoots of privet are green, and the flowers of Purple Magnolia are very beautiful. In summer, there are green leaves and thick shadows covering the ground. Pepper, orange and grapefruit open all kinds of flowers to compete for the branches. In autumn, oranges and grapefruits are full of fruits, color and fragrance, and pepper and privet also begin to bear fruit. Winter snow hanging branches, orange, grapefruit and privet become silver wrapped in the world, which is a touch of vibrant green. The scenery of the four seasons is different, and the music is endless. In fact, it is the best model of plant landscape in *Chu Ci*.

#### 5. Application of Plant Landscaping in Chu Ci

According to the sentence “Wild ginger and dahurian angelica, I hope they grow vigorously. So I can harvest them when they are ripe.” in *Li Sao*, because Peony (Liu Yi), Lysimachia, wild ginger and Angelica dahurica are all herbs, and because they can be used as medicine, trees and shrubs that are also traditional Chinese medicine can be used for the design of herb gardens or horticultural therapy. Arbor shrub herb, such as camphor + ginkgo + *Eucommia ulmoides* + *Taxus chinensis* -- *Ligustrum lucidum* + *Cornus officinalis* + ten meridians + tongtuomu -- Angelica dahurica + Lysimachia + peony + fine leaf beauty cherry + strawberry + Hosta, can be used for natural plant landscape design. The addition of *Cinnamomum camphora* and other trees, privet and other shrubs can enrich the vertical spatial structure, improve the ecological stability of the community, and enhance the ornamental and medicinal value of plants. Under tall trees and shrubs, it can also provide people with a place to rest and cool.

In *Qi Jian - Self Pity*, according to the orchard plant configuration of “miscellaneous orange and grapefruit think they are confined, and list Xin Yi and Jiao Zhen”, privet (Zhen) + pepper (pepper) + orange + grapefruit Purple Magnolia has begun to take shape. Trees, shrubs and herbs can be built based on this structure, such as the orchard plant landscaping mode of *Magnolia grandiflora* + privet + pepper + peach + orange + pomelo Purple Magnolia + pomegranate + Begonia strawberry + dwarf lilyturf. The addition of *Magnolia grandiflora* and other trees can enrich the interspecific

relationship, color and spatial level of arboreal plants, and provide a large shading place for the orchard for the owner to rest; Shrubs such as Begonia and pomegranate can also play an ornamental and economic role; Strawberries and other herbs can not only cover the ground and beautify the courtyard, but also meet the needs of the owner's daily life. In this way, a small orchard full of wild interests can be formed without careful care. There are beautiful sweet fruits in all seasons, which makes people feel free and peaceful.

## 6. Conclusion

The ancients in China had unique ingenuity in the use of plants in gardening, creating a plant landscape with distinctive national characteristics and unique cultural interest. [1] The description of plant landscaping in *Chu Ci* is the most typical example, but unfortunately, there is little application and innovation of plant landscaping, which can not be integrated into people's life and put into reality. On the basis of inheriting the essence of classical gardens, we should integrate into the needs of new era and new culture for plant landscaping, and innovate with the new demands of contemporary people on plant landscape. *Chu Ci* is a precious treasure left to us by the ancients. The good application of plant landscaping in modern garden design will be of great significance to the inheritance of culture, the construction and development of characteristic cities, and promote the establishment of cultural self-confidence and the construction of beautiful China.

## References

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